



Acton Weekly

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All Acton All the Time

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New Lighting Being Installed for 21 Elm Street Ball Field

By Clint Seward

A Public Hearing on the new lighting project for the 21 Elm Street ball field was the main business of the Planning Board meeting on July 10th. The Town of Acton is requesting a special permit to complete the project to replace the existing lighting with new lights that will be safer, will reduce lighting trespass onto abutting properties, and will replace decaying light poles. No opposition was expressed by the many abutters attending the Public Hearing.

In other Planning Board business, changes were approved to a previously approved improvement at 45 Main Street. Also, the Wireless Communications Committee has established a web page on the Acton Town website detailing its findings on Cell Tower regulations.

The 21 Elm Street ball field is used for softball games and for football practice, which generated a lot of interest at this Public Hearing. Representatives from the Pop Warner League attended as well as coaches from the softball teams. About a dozen abutting property owners also attended since lighting at night directly affects their properties.

Cathy Fochtman, Acton Recreation Director, presented a description of the Elm Street ball field lighting project that is designed to address several major issues. First, a 1984 court injunction cited the need for Acton to address lighting trespass onto abutting properties. Secondly, current poles are over 35 years old and are visibly decaying. Third, there is a safety issue since the level of light now provided is so low that it may not be sufficient to safely see a hit softball or thrown football.

The new lights have a directional design that will reduce the light trespass onto abutting property. Light measurements were taken around the field as presently lighted, and the new directional lights will reduce light trespass by an estimated two thirds.

Jeff Vandegrift, a concerned abutter, asked if this improvement is guaranteed in the contract from the supplier and assurances were given that this is the case. Also, lights are set on a timer basis to comply with Town regulations for how late the lights may be left on. Lights will be automatically turned on and off to match scheduled activities, a feature that will minimize impact on abutting properties and will save energy.

The existing wooden poles have

Continued on page 5



Anne Dykiel

It is time for fireworks to celebrate Independence Day! The Chwalek family, Landon 2, Ava 1 and Jennifer use glue and glitter to splash a firework of color across night sky paper. At the Children's Discovery Museum.

Fifth Congressional District Candidates Sign on For League of Women Voters Debate

All Democratic and Republican candidates running for the 5th Congressional District seat being vacated by Rep. Martin Meehan have agreed to participate in two pre-primary debates sponsored by the League of Women Voters.

The debates will be Tuesday, Aug. 21, at Acton-Boxborough Regional High School in Acton, and Thursday, Aug. 23, at the Cochran Chapel at Phillips Academy in Andover. Both debates will begin at 7:30 p.m. The primary election is Tuesday, Sept. 4.

The Democratic candidates who will be participating are Eileen Donoghue, Jamie Eldridge, Barry Finegold, James Miceli and Niki Tsongas. The Republican candidates are Jim Ogonowski and Thomas P. Tierney. Independent candidates in uncontested races who qualify for the ballot will be invited to make a statement at the events.

The Leagues in the 29 towns in the district will also jointly sponsor two debates before the Oct. 16 general election for the Congressional seat.

Those debates will be Tuesday, Sept. 25, at Acton-Boxborough Regional High School in Acton, and Thursday, Sept. 27, at the Collins Center at Andover High School in Andover.

All candidates who qualify for the ballot will be invited to participate in those debates.

The deadline to register to vote in the primary election is Aug. 15; the deadline to register for the general election is Sept. 26.

The League of Women Voters reminds voters that the primary election will be held the day after Labor Day. Absentee ballots should be available in town clerks' offices two to three weeks before the election.

Voters can obtain an absentee ballot by requesting it by mail or by having a family member request it in person at the clerk's office. Voters can also go in person to the clerk's office, fill out the application and vote at the same time. Absentee ballots must be returned to the town clerk by election day.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization. The League encourages informed and active participation in government and works to increase understanding of major public policy issues. For more information on the state and local Leagues, see the website, www.lwvma.org.

Acton Police Quell Disturbance After Talks Fail

At approximately 0430 hrs. on Sunday, July 8, 2007 the Acton Police Department responded to a reported domestic disturbance on Great Road. Officers were confronted by one of the involved parties, armed with a large 13" double edged knife a short distance from the home. The subject threatened officers and it appeared his intent was to force officers to shoot him. Officers attempted to negotiate surrender for at least thirty minutes, but it appeared that negotiations would fail.

Sergeant John Cooney retrieved a less lethal bean bag shotgun from his cruiser and fired once, striking the subject in the chest. The subject went down, was subdued and taken into custody without further incident or injury to him or officers. The subject was taken to Emerson Hospital in Concord for observation.

The subject is identified as Mark Fleck, age 27 of 426 Great Road, Acton, Massachusetts. Mr. Fleck was arrested and charged with assault with a dangerous weapon, carrying a dangerous weapon and disorderly conduct. Mr. Fleck was arraigned in Concord District Court on Monday July 9, 2007.

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Cathy Fochtman
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Acton MA 01720

Rotary Invites Golfers to Its 2007 Tournament

On Wednesday, August 1, The Acton-Boxborough Rotary Club will hold annual golf tournament/key fund raiser at The Woods of Westminister. This is a major fund raiser for the Club for the year and key to its ability to support the many "helping others" activities for which the Club is known. The success each year depends upon the willingness of individual golfers to mix the fun of a great day of golf with a desire to help others. Rotary is asking you to circle August 1 on your calendar, now.

First, the fun: A rare opportunity to play one of the area's truly interesting golf courses. You will start with a continental breakfast followed by a shotgun start at 9:00. The format will be scramble, with prizes for team low gross, longest drive, closest to the pin, closest to the line AND an exotic new car for a hole-in-one. The cost is \$125 per player which includes green fees, cart, breakfast and a full meal the conclusion. Great raffles prizes will be one of the highlights of the meal. Rain, block off August 1!

AB Rotary sponsors a wide variety of causes impacting many in our town. These include Youth Leadership Seminars, high school senior scholarships, bursaries for elementary school students, DARE, a variety of senior citizens projects plus a continuous program of new books for our town libraries.

In addition to local programs, AB Rotary is very active on the international scene working through Rotary International. Projects include the eradication of Polio, international scholarships plus housing and water purification projects in third world countries.

Again, this is Rotary's main fund raiser. It's success, and thus Rotary's ability to continue and expand upon its many service projects, depends on the willingness of the avid golfers in our area to participate. We are asking you to both have a great day on a fun course and help us help the many people we target. Call Liz Rameier at (978) 263-3632 or Geoff Kerr at (978) 264-2719, visit the Club website www.actonboxboroughrotary.org or contact any AB Rotary member. One more thing... circle August 1, "Rotary Golf."

Vacation Bible School at St. Matthew's United Methodist Church August 20-24

Are you looking for fathoms of fun for your children this summer? Then you'll want to head to St. Matthew's United Methodist Church for a net full of fun at the GREAT BIBLE REEF! This exciting vacation Bible school is for children ages 4 through 12. The fun begins Monday, August 20th and continues through Friday, August 24th. Sessions run from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon each day. The GREAT BIBLE REEF, you'll hear stories about Jesus, make cool crafts, sing catchy reef tunes, play zany games, and make some new friends! Each day is a new Bible story to explore through loads of fun activities.

Everyone is welcome! You do not have to be a member of this or any other church to attend. There are lots of wonderful vacation Bible schools in our area, but you can come to more than one! There is a minimal registration fee of \$30 per child, to help cover expenses. For more information or to register for VBS, please call 978-263-2822 or stop by the church office (Tues-Wed 8:30-2:00pm; Thurs 9:00-12:00pm) to pick up a registration form.

St. Matthew's United Methodist Church is the church with the big beautiful green lawn located right off Exit 41 (Newtown Road) of Rt. 2 at 435 Central Street in Acton, MA. E-mail the church at smumc@verizon.net; or consult www.saint-matthews.org. See you at the GREAT BIBLE REEF!

Library Now Open Thursday Evenings

Acton Memorial Library, 486 Main St., will be open Thursday evenings from 5 to 9 p.m. beginning July 1st.

Additional library hours were the first choice of people responding to a survey in late summer 2006, with Thursday evenings being chosen most often. The survey was one step in the library's long range planning process.

The library had closed on Thursday evenings in 2003 due to lack of funding. Money for additional staff hours to re-open on Thursday nights was approved in the FY08 budget process.

Library hours are now Monday through Thursday, 9-9; Friday 9-5 and Saturday 9 to noon.

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Board Approves changes to the 45 Main Street Road Improvement Plan

Planning Board from page 1

noticeable rotting and need to be replaced, which is to be expected since they are over 35 years old. The new light poles are galvanized steel and will be guaranteed for 25 years, with a lifetime estimated to be well past that.

The new lighting will improve the safety of the fields. Present lighting is 40% of recommended level on the infield, and the outfield is only 33% of recommendations, raising concerns that lighting levels might not be enough for safe play. The new lights will reach recommended levels and also meet the most recent Acton Lighting Ordinances.

Ms Fochtman stated that the new lights will allow more usage of the field, which will help Acton address its continuing shortage of field space. She also presented an energy cost savings estimate of over \$38,000 over the lifetime of the project due to the timers and the more efficient lights.

While there were approximately a dozen abutters at the hearing, none expressed opposition to the plan. Gregory Niemyski, Planning Board Chairman, noted this agreement among all parties and complimented the project team for a good job in meeting with all parties to sort out all the issues.

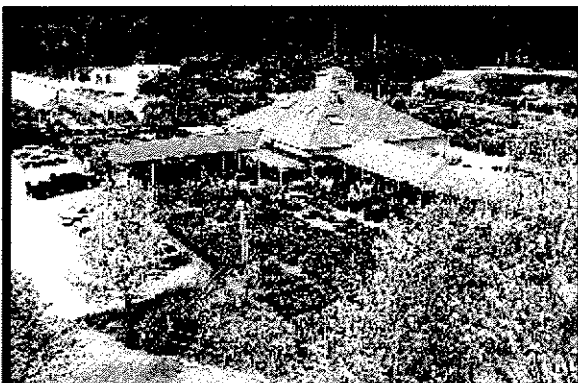
The second main item of business was the changes to the 45 Main Street Road Improvement Plan. Roland Bartl, Acton Town Planner, said he had no real issue with the changes, but requested the owners to present it to the full board to be sure they agreed with his assessment. The changes were

described by property owners Paul Gaboury and Glen Kaufmann and related to the vehicle turnaround configuration. The purpose was to improve the appearance of the finished property. The changes were judged to be within the approved project, and were approved by the board.

An update on the Verizon North Acton Tower project was discussed. Verizon is adding new capabilities to the tower, and expects to have the work completed by the end of August. The issue is that the Planning board requested that Verizon issue a request to withdraw from a previously permitted new cell tower at another location in Acton, which was approved in case the North Acton Tower could not be upgraded. Verizon has provided a draft letter of withdrawal that will be applicable when the North Acton Tower work is completed. The Board will take final action at the Aug 28th meeting.

The Wireless Communications Committee was formed at the request of the April 9th Acton Town Meeting to propose new cell tower bylaws for the Town of Acton. It has posted information on the Acton Town website relating to this issue for anyone to access. All documents related to the cell tower public hearings to date will soon be on the website, as will be decisions of surrounding towns on cell tower regulations.

The next scheduled meeting is July 24th at 7:30 PM at the Memorial Library to give a final decision on the Elm Street lighting.



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